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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1312
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5871
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000133

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/PD; NSC FOR E.PHU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA -- USG-FUNDED SPEAKER PROGRAM MOVES FORWARD

REF: A. (08) JAKARTA 2091

[1](#)B. (08) JAKARTA 1663

[1](#)C. (08) JAKARTA 481

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate General Surabaya.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Mission has sponsored a speaker symposium and photo exhibition on Burma in two Indonesian cities, Bandung in West Java and Malang in East Java. The USG-funded programs seeks to increase public awareness on the Burma human rights situation and democracy struggle among Indonesian students. Part of a series of USG-supported Burma outreach events, the program has netted strong student participation and positive local media coverage. The next such event is slated to take place in Semarang, Central Java.
END SUMMARY.

BURMA PROGRAM IN WEST JAVA

[1](#)3. (SBU) Mission's speaker symposium on Burma is moving forward. Poloff participated in a conference held on January 21 at the University of Parahyangan in Bandung, the capital of West Java. Seventy students and six faculty members participated in the conference, which reviewed the human rights situation and democracy struggle in Burma. The symposium also included an exhibition of photos of the 2007 democracy marches and the regime's brutal crackdown.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The road show is an initiative by members of the Indonesian Parliament (DPR) to raise awareness and concerns about Burma. The project, held under the auspices of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary for Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), was funded by the State Department's Public Diplomacy Small Democracy Grant Program. The photo exhibition was developed by the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

[1](#)5. (SBU) Djoko Susilo, DPR member and human rights advocate, led the panel discussion in Bandung along with a faculty member and a graduate student. Susilo made a passionate call to the young audience to support the democracy struggle in Burma, comparing this to the struggle Indonesians faced in toppling former Indonesian dictator Suharto (Susilo was a leader of the Indonesian democracy movement). An outspoken critic of the Burmese regime, he told poloff that the seminars provide students the opportunity to learn about the human rights situation in Burma outside of the traditional classroom setting. After the conference, several students told poloff that the symposium provided a better contextual understanding of the issues than any textbook.

INITIAL PROGRAM IN EAST JAVA

¶6. (U) The initial program took place on December 10 at Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java, drawing over a hundred students, faculty and media. A local political scientist described problems facing the Burmese people, reviewing the human rights violations in the country and the international outflows, which include refugees, trafficking and HIV/AIDS. Susilo criticized China and India for "enriching" General Than Shwe while not caring about the plight of the Burmese people. He urged that ASEAN member-states get more involved and apply pressure on the Burmese regime. The audience asked well-informed, probing questions, such as:

- Does the non-interference principle of ASEAN obstruct progress in improving the situation in Burma?
- Will the ASEAN Charter help?
- Why does the UN not respond more strongly?
- How can Indonesia do more?

NEXT STOP: CENTRAL JAVA

¶7. (C) The next stop for the symposium is slated to be Semarang, the capital of Central Java. The symposiums are a spin-off of the USG-sponsored regional civil society conference on Burma held in Jakarta, March 6-7, 2008 (see ref c). Susilo believes that there is considerable room for more conferences in Indonesia, commenting that most Indonesians are not fully aware of the situation in Burma and need to learn more about the brutal treatment accorded the democracy movement in that country. Mission will work closely with

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Susilo--as well as with NDI and local NGO's--in developing additional projects.

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